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Mar 18th, 2:58 PM

## "Dancing is of More Importance to a Gentleman Than at First it Appears"

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# Pride and Prejudice: The Student Blog

Monday, March 18, 2013

## "Dancing is of More Importance to a Gentleman Than at First it Appears"

Within a collection of **Literary Anecdotes of the Eighteenth Century** (1815) lies a letter Reverend Roger Pickering composed to a dear friend "On the Education of his Son." Pickering pens a detailed account of what he hopes to teach to this friend's son as his tutor, covering topics ranging from the classical languages to dancing. He argues that "Dancing is of more importance to a Gentleman than at first it appears. People form their judgment, and take impressions very frequently, from a person's air and carriage, which dancing greatly contributes to make easy and graceful" (334). Pickering writes further to explain that the youth that he is instructing has tendencies that are unbecoming of a Gentleman his age. He feels firmly that "A little introduction into suitable company...together with learning to dance, will in a short time be found to make a great alteration in all these particulars" (336).



Pride and Prejudice showcases the importance of a proper gentleman in motion at the Meryton Ball. Upon entering the room, Mr. Darcy is quickly decided as being the most agreeable and attractive man in attendance. However, this opinion is short lived. Mr. Darcy only dances with members of the same party he arrives with and refuses to be introduced to any other ladies. Shortly after this it is decided that "He was the proudest, most disagreeable man in the world, and every body hoped he would never come there again" (40). This is a strong contrast against Mr. Bingley, who danced the night away and decided to throw a ball of his own. Between the two men, it is not who has the most money, the best looks, or the larger property that establishes his likability, but his ability and desire to dance. Mr. Darcy in not dancing presents himself as a stiff person with little to no regard to those around him. He is seen as though he views himself to be better than the others present in his company. Mr. Bingley is considered the opposite because he acquaints himself with everyone in the room and is not shy about moving his feet. If only Mr. Darcy would have considered a dance lesson or two, maybe he would have kept the heads of Meryton society turned in the right direction.

Posted by **Dena Railsback** at 2:58 PM

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### About

A blog site featuring original research by undergraduate students at Wright State University enrolled in Crystal B. Lal's *Pride and Prejudice* (Spring 2011) class.

We hope you enjoy reading about the novel and historical contexts surrounding the famous novel. And be sure to participate in CELIA's Bicentennial events on October 2013. Click [here](#) for more information.

### Blog Archive

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